

Active Citizen Participation in Monitoring Public Policy and Realizing Social Justice

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Abstract: *This research aims to identify and analyze the factors that influence active citizen engagement in monitoring public policies, as well as to provide recommendations for policy reforms to enhance community participation. Using a literature review approach that includes various academic sources, such as scientific journals and publications from community organizations, the research applies thematic analysis to identify patterns of participation, the factors influencing it, and its impact on social development. The results show that a lack of political education and distrust in the government are the main obstacles to public participation. Active citizen participation plays a crucial role in ensuring balanced social and legal justice, and contributes to building a more just and harmonious society. This research is expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical aspects of public participation, guiding policymakers and civil society in designing more effective strategies to increase public involvement. The policy recommendations aim to expand and strengthen citizen engagement in promoting social welfare.*

Keywords : *engagement, participation, policy*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keterlibatan aktif warga negara dalam memantau kebijakan publik, serta memberikan rekomendasi untuk reformasi kebijakan guna meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi literatur yang mencakup tinjauan dari berbagai sumber akademik, seperti jurnal ilmiah dan publikasi organisasi masyarakat, penelitian ini menerapkan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola partisipasi, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhinya, dan dampaknya terhadap pembangunan sosial. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kurangnya pendidikan politik serta ketidakpercayaan terhadap pemerintah menjadi hambatan utama bagi partisipasi publik. Partisipasi aktif warga negara berperan dalam memastikan terciptanya keadilan sosial dan hukum yang seimbang, serta membantu membangun masyarakat yang lebih adil dan harmonis. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi baik dalam aspek teoretis maupun praktis terkait partisipasi publik, serta menjadi panduan bagi para pembuat kebijakan dan masyarakat sipil dalam merancang strategi yang lebih efektif untuk meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat. Rekomendasi kebijakan yang disampaikan bertujuan untuk memperluas dan memperkuat keterlibatan warga dalam mendukung kesejahteraan sosial.

Kata Kunci: Keterlibatan, Partisipasi, Kebijakan

Introduction

In a democracy, active community participation is a vital component in ensuring that public policies reflect the aspirations and needs of citizens. However, in reality, this participation is often minimal. Many citizens feel marginalized or lack adequate access to be involved in the policy-making process. As a result, the policies that emerge often fail to represent the interests of all segments of society, especially the vulnerable, thereby exacerbating social injustice.

This research will highlight the low level of active citizen engagement in the public policy monitoring process in Indonesia. The main focus is to understand the barriers that hinder such participation, as well as how community disengagement impacts social justice. The research will also explore how current mechanisms for public participation can be improved or enhanced.

A participatory approach is employed in this research, prioritizing community involvement in the policy-making process. Jürgen Habermas' (1996) theory of deliberative democracy will be used as the theoretical foundation. This theory emphasizes the importance of open and inclusive deliberation in the policy-making process, where citizens can participate equally. Additionally, John Rawls' (1971) theory of social justice will be used to understand the importance of fair and equitable public policies for all members of society.

Several previous studies have shown that citizen participation in Indonesia remains low. For example, Fauzi (2020) found that a lack of political education and distrust in the government are the main obstacles to public participation. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the factors influencing active citizen participation in overseeing public policies and to provide recommendations for policy reforms that can increase community involvement in public decision-making.

This research is expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical studies on public participation and social justice. Theoretically, it will enrich insights into the relationship between citizen participation and social justice. Practically, the results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers and civil society in designing more effective and inclusive participation strategies.

Methods

This research uses a reference study approach to analyze active citizen participation in safeguarding public interests and supporting social welfare. The initial stage of the research involved conducting a literature review of various academic sources, such as scientific journals and books. The focus was on literature relevant to the topic of citizen participation. Peer-reviewed articles were selected to ensure the quality and validity of the research.

Data will be collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar and Google Books. The keywords used include "engagement," "participation," and

“policy.” Once the data is collected, it will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The aim of this analysis is to identify important themes, such as patterns of citizen participation, factors influencing their involvement, and the impact on social development and public policy.

In addition, a critical analysis approach will be employed to evaluate the reviewed literature. The researcher will assess the strengths, limitations, and relevance of previous studies, including the methods used and the contexts in which they were conducted. This will help uncover unexplored knowledge gaps and provide a theoretical foundation for future research.

This research will produce a synthesis of the literature, demonstrating how active citizen participation can strengthen public and social agency. The findings will include policy recommendations aimed at encouraging broader and more effective citizen engagement in support of social welfare.

Results

Concept of Social Justice Based on Active Citizen Participation

In Aristotle’s view of justice, as outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he emphasized that justice is a principle related to human relations, where everyone must receive what is rightfully theirs in accordance with applicable laws and norms. When we discuss justice in the context of active citizen participation, we expand the concept into a broader field—specifically, the relationship between citizens and authorities, as well as the important role of citizens in ensuring social justice and balanced laws.

Justice in a democracy is not only achieved through a stable legal system, but also through the participation of citizens in decision-making processes that affect their lives. This participation can take various forms, such as voting in elections, contributing to public policy, monitoring the implementation of laws, and engaging in social campaigns that protect citizens’ rights.

As active citizens, individuals have a moral responsibility to ensure that government policies align with the principles of justice. Aristotle emphasized that each person should receive their fair share. In this regard, citizen participation is essential not only to ensure that laws are properly enforced but also to guarantee that resources, opportunities, and rights are distributed fairly and proportionately among members of society. Actively participating in this process helps prevent injustices caused by disproportionate actions, such as monopolies of power or economic inequality.

Public policy oversight is one tangible form of active citizen participation. Aristotle noted that if someone takes more than they are entitled to, it is considered unjust. In government terms, this principle can be applied to unfair or non-transparent actions by the state. Citizens who actively monitor public policies help prevent corruption, abuse of power, and inequality. They serve as watchdogs, ensuring that leaders act fairly and prioritize the common good.

Overall, as Aristotle explained, the active participation of citizens is a fundamental component in realizing social justice and balanced laws. By participating actively, citizens can help ensure that justice is upheld in social, economic, and political life. Through this participation, justice not only strengthens human relationships but also creates a more just, harmonious, and prosperous society.

Forms of supervision in public policy

The definition of supervision in English is often referred to as “controlling.” This term has a broader meaning than the notion of supervision itself, but among experts or scholars, the term “controlling” is often equated with supervision. Therefore, supervision includes control. The word “control” comes from the verb “to control,” meaning to direct, correct, or guide activities that may be headed in the wrong direction and to straighten them toward the right path. Properly conducted supervision enhances the clarity of the planning function in public policy implementation (Joko, 2022: 8).

Public policy, in English, is referred to as Public Policy. According to Black’s Law Dictionary, the term “public” is defined as: 1) relating to or belonging to an entire community, state, or nation; 2) open or available for all to use, share, or enjoy; and 3) (in the context of a company) having shares that are available on an open market. Meanwhile, the term “policy” is defined as: 1) the general principle by which a government is guided in its management of public affairs; 2) a document containing a contract of insurance; and 3) a type of lottery in which bettors select numbers and place bets with a policy writer (Hermanto, 2022: 7).

Thus, policy can broadly be defined as the proposed actions of individuals, groups, institutions, or governments to achieve certain goals or objectives within an environment (Hermanto, 2022: 9). Public policy, therefore, refers to actions taken by the government, as the holder of state power, to address issues faced by citizens (Hermanto, 2022: 14).

Effective supervision in the implementation of public policies is essential to achieving expected outcomes. The principles of supervision in policy implementation include several key elements. 1) The principle of achieving a goal: supervision should be aimed at achieving objectives by making necessary improvements to avoid deviations from the plan; 2) The principle of efficiency: supervision is efficient when it prevents deviations from the plan, thereby avoiding unforeseen problems; 3) The principle of responsibility: effective supervision can only be carried out when leaders take responsibility for the supervision plan’s implementation; 4) The principle of future orientation: supervision should not only address current issues but also aim to prevent future deviations from the plan; 5) The principle of planning reflection: the supervision program should align well with the needs of the organizational environment, reflecting the character and structure of the planning process; 6) The principle of standards: effective control requires

appropriate and updated standards, which serve as benchmarks for implementation and for measuring the success of supervision; 7) The principle of strategic supervision: efficient supervision should focus on strategic factors within the organization; 8) Finally, supervision must also be flexible and adaptive to avoid failure in plan implementation (Joko, 2020: 61-63).

According to Hidayat (2024: 109-110), supervision of public policy in Indonesia can be categorized into several forms. Community supervision plays an important role in influencing government policies. The public can participate in supervision through various channels, such as involvement in policymaking. This can occur through institutions such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the mass media, and community groups. Direct supervision occurs when the community directly oversees government activities through NGOs or the media. Lastly, the function of social control allows civil society to influence government policies in various ways, such as expressing opinions on government actions. Civil society has the right to voice their views on the government's performance and can actively participate in monitoring and controlling public policies (Hidayat 2024: 109-110).

Factors That Encourage Active Participation In Public Policy

Public participation is generally influenced by two main factors: internal and external. Internal factors include individual characteristics that can influence an individual's decision to participate in an activity, such as age, gender, family status, education level, ethnicity, religion, language, occupation, income level, the distance from home to the activity or workplace, and land ownership (Cohen & Uphoff, 1977). External factors, on the other hand, consist of external parties with an interest in and influence over the program, including village administrators, community leaders, local government, NGOs, third-party organizations such as social foundations and universities, and other stakeholders (Sunarti, 2003).

According to Slamet (1994), individual characteristics can also influence group activity, mobility, and financial capability. Among the community characteristics studied, age and education level have the most significant impact on participation, while income level and the number of family dependents were found to have little effect (Wijayanti, 2011). Education plays a critical role, as it allows individuals to communicate more effectively, engage in discussions, and respond quickly to advances in knowledge and technology. Higher education levels often lead to a broader understanding of development issues and the forms of participation available (Slamet, 1994).

Turner suggests that income levels also provide a great opportunity for people to participate, as financial capability influences a person's ability to invest effort in activities, particularly when the outcomes align with their priorities and needs. Furthermore, factors such as how long a person has lived in a neighborhood

or their status as a landowner can encourage cooperation and participation in community activities (Panudju, 1999).

A person's willingness to participate is often influenced by psychological factors, including their expectations of the program's benefits and motivation to engage. Motivation is closely tied to the belief that goals can be achieved. The expectation of receiving specific benefits, particularly those related to basic needs, acts as a driving force behind participation in development activities. Additionally, the degree to which an individual understands and has access to information about the program plays a key role in fostering their willingness to participate (Lugiarti, 2004).

According to Arnstein (1969), an individual's ability to participate in a program is largely determined by their education and experience, while the opportunity to participate is shaped by the program organizers. The extent to which the organizers provide space for participants, the availability of information, and the level of support offered by the organizers all contribute significantly to encouraging public participation (Suharto, 2009).

Conclusions

The active involvement of citizens is crucial in upholding public policy and fostering social justice. The concept of social justice through active participation emphasizes that everyone has the right and responsibility to take part in decision-making processes that directly impact their lives. There are various ways to exercise oversight over public policies, such as through education, advocacy, and monitoring, all of which aim to ensure transparency, accountability, and prevent abuses of power. Factors that support active participation include education, legal awareness, access to information, and effective communication. By enhancing the level of participation, citizens can make a more significant contribution to building social justice, ensuring that public policies align more closely with the needs and expectations of the people.

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